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Did you know that 79% of all homicides in the United States is caused by the use of guns? In retrospect it may be surprising but considering how there's more guns than people in the United States, it isn't as surprising as one would be led to believe. America is notoriously known for its mass gun violence, and many believe it's due to the second amendment which states that we have "the right to bear arms." But just because we have the right to do so, it doesn't mean we abuse that right. Guns are very dangerous weapons that have cost the lives of millions of people around the world. And as a matter to prevent this statistic from growing, America should adopt more gun laws and/or reforms to ensure the safety of not only us but the next generation.

Guns have become a very controversial topic which it shouldn't be due to the toll it takes on society. According to the political cartoon from Joe Heller, there is a news report discussing another mass shooting and that nothing was done of the situation. America is infamously known for mass shootings including school shootings that take the lives of kids and the teachers who dedicated their lives into enriching the youth. This political cartoon demonstrates that acquiring such dangerous weapons is easy but there isn't anything being done by politicians to reduce the spread of gun violence. The kid responds by saying "I guess I'll need to get used to it." This shouldn't be a part of our societal norms. Kids shouldn't have to

encounter something at this young of an age and make it apart of their routine and expect this sort of thing to become a part of their daily lives. We need to protect today's youth and make sure they don't have to go on with another day of having to worry about potentially losing their lives. According to The Washington Post, "The 77-page report released Sunday by a special Texas House investigative committee presented stunning new details about the "chaos" and "confusion" during the May 24 attack at Robb Elementary School, which killed 19 students and two teachers." This is an example of one of the school shootings from this year that hit the headline. It's depressing to hear that the lives of little kids are being taken away from the world. They have barely even begun to start their lives, nor have they had the opportunity to live it out. According to Vera Bergengruen, one of the graduating seniors said "Those kids were so excited to see us in our cap and gown. They're looking at us like, 'I'm gonna be there one day.'" Just a day before the shooting, those kids were visited by those seniors and were looking forward to being a senior themselves. They were looking forward to growing up and living out their lives and dreams but just a day later, they were robbed of living out their dream and getting to see their families grow up. If no change comes to gun laws, how else can we shield the next generation from these unrighteous matters. Without them, there is no future.

Not only are guns used for mass shootings and homicides, more than half of the deaths caused by guns have been due to suicides. And so this presents us with another problem with guns. As we can see from the political cartoon created by Bill Bramhall (NY Daily News) that a man, that appears to be not in the right state of mind, was able to purchase a gun. Background checks are a way of ensuring that not anybody can purchase a gun so as a result only those that are mentally and criminally sane, can purchase one. But at this day and age, anyone can

purchase a gun in most states in this country without any problem. There seems to be little to no background checks which is extremely vital as you can't just allow anyone to own a gun. This ultimately results in homicides and even mass shootings as previously mentioned. Before being able to purchase a gun, a background check needs to be thorough of one's mental state and criminal history. People who have history of being violent and anger management problems shouldn't be bestowed upon with such a minacious weapon. According to The Washington Post, "The report, which deliberately does not name Ramos, says the gunman was driven by a "desire for notoriety and fame" and that he had displayed signs of mental instability and violent tendencies to family and social media acquaintances." The gunman, Salvador Ramos, was 18 years old when he was displaying signs of depression and suicidal tendencies. Although none of the gunman's actions are excusable, he was a kid that has had his fair share of traumatic experiences. He clearly wasn't in the right state of mind to possess any sort of weapon let alone an assault rifle. According to the Investigative Committee Report on the Robb Elementary Shooting, Salvador Ramos managed to get an assault rifle along with ammunition on the same day of his birthday with a total of \$3,802. Not only was he not in the right state of mind to purchase such a weapon but his family, parents, and grandparents, had criminal records yet somehow, he managed to get the assault rifle along with weapons within one day. If there were stronger background checks the lives lost due to this tragic incident could have been potentially saved. Those 19 kids 2 teachers could have lived out their lives and all the students who have attended that school would have been spared the trauma of having witnessed and been victim of a mass shooting.

The United States can adopt certain gun laws and/or reforms that will reduce gun violence. One possible solution consists of taxing guns and ammunition by a lot. According to Don Beyer, "The Assault Weapons Excise Act defines firearms and ammunition magazines subject to its 1000 percent excise tax using updated language and terms largely drawn from Rep. David Cicilline's Assault Weapons Ban of 2021." This Assault Weapons Excise Act would increase the price of assault weapons by 10x fold. Assault weapons are never needed in any circumstance and they're the primary weapon used in mass shootings so taxing such a weapon is completely fair. Although this tax generates revenue for the government, the purpose behind this tax isn't to generate revenue for them. Applying such a tax will shift the demand curve of assault ones extremely down thus reducing the quantity of assault weapons purchased making it a lot safer for communities all the U.S. According to Don Beyer, "The man who killed 19 children and 2 teachers at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde used an AR-15 model rifle which reportedly retails for \$1,870. If the Assault Weapons Excise Act were enacted, the cost of the same gun would be \$18,700." Most people won't spend almost \$20,000 on a gun because it's such an expensive price for something like that. And then you would also have to pay around \$20,000 more on ammunition making it pretty much pointless to spend money on assault rifle. Most criminals wouldn't even spend this much on a weapon because most criminals use guns to make money, but they can't buy the gun if they can't afford it. This law could have drastically reduced gun violence in America and reduce the amount of mass shootings as pretty much all mass shootings consist of an assault weapon.

Some have argued that adding more stringent laws and reforms prohibiting the possession and use of guns, we can't be for certain whether they have any effect on gun

violence. But if we compare our country with other countries with laws that reinforce the safety of their citizens through strong laws, they can safely say that they don't have to worry about their gun violence as much as America. According to ProCon, "Both Switzerland and Finland require gun owners to acquire licenses and pass background checks that include mental and criminal records, among other restrictions and requirements." They have more restrictive gun laws than us as they have passed more stringent checks to get access to guns. Thus, they have less than half of the guns per capita than the U.S. According to ProCon, Finland has ranked number 4 in international gun ownership with 195 gun related deaths in 2007. While in comparison the in the same year U.S. ranked first in international gun ownership by having less than twice the gun ownership per capita and having 29,984 gun related deaths. The U.S. had about 154 times the amount of gun related deaths. This just goes to show that having stronger gun laws involving better background checks goes a long way. If the U.S. was to adopt similar laws and reforms, it can potentially save the lives tens of thousands of Americans every year.

Although many people use guns to protect themselves from eminent danger, guns pose a greater risk to society than it does to protect it. Guns potentially make a dangerous situation even more dangerous than it needs to be. By imposing more strict and stringent laws, America can become a safer place not only for us but for the next generation as well. If we don't protect the kids of the next generation, we can't expect the future to be as bright as we once hoped it would be. So, we must take action and enforce more gun laws including better background checks, so that when it comes to purchasing guns, they are put in the right hands and don't constitute a greater risk to society.

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